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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 001585

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PGOV IR IIZ

SUBJECT: PRT-WASIT: POLICE CHIEF MEETS WITH SADRIST PC MEMBER

Classified By: Classified by: PRT Team Leader Rob Jones for reasons 1.4 (b, d).

¶1. (U) This is a PRT Wasit reporting cable.

¶2. (S//REL TO USA, ACGU) Summary: On May 20, CDR 214 FB and PRT met with Sadrists Provincial Council (PC) member Ahmed Hasan Ebrah, Wasit Provincial Director of Police (PDoP) MG Abd al Hanin Hamud Faysal al Amir, and Kut Criminal Investigative Division (KCID) CDR Majid Latif Abd-al-Sadah al Ammarah to discuss the relationship between the Wasit Iraq Police Force and Provincial level politicians. CPT Majid described recent ISF operations in Kut targeting Special Groups' caches that resulted in the seizure of RPG-7s and other weapons, ammunition and ordnance. According to the PDoP, the three JAM sub-sets are: (1) "native" Iraqi groups; (2) Iraqis knowingly recruited and supported by Iran; and (3) Iraqis unwittingly recruited and run by Iranian agents. Hanin noted, and Ebrah agreed, that the best tactic to combat the 3rd group is to address the economic situation, as unemployment drives militia recruitment. All present supported the formation of a "Committee on the Investigation of Political Figures," consisting of representatives from the IP, judiciary, and Provincial Council, to provide oversight of any legal actions targeting Provincial Officials. In a separate meeting prior to the arrival of MG Hanin and CPT Majid, Ebrah told PRT and CDR 214 FB that the USG should better publicize its reconstruction support to the population of Wasit, and again expressed concern that he was being targeted by the IP for political reasons. End Summary.

¶3. (S//REL TO USA, ACGU) Background. In a May 17 meeting, CDR 214 FB, ODA 5121 ACDR, PRT IPAQO, and Kut CID CDR, CPT Majid agreed to set a meeting with PDoP MG Hanin, and Sadrists Trend PC member Ahmed Ebrah to address the relationship between Wasit ISF and Sadrists officials. Ebrah had claimed that KSWAT and KCID have unfairly targeted him and other Sadrists Trend political figures, seeking to elicit false confessions against him from detainees. For reasons not connected to Ebrah's allegations, both units were recently directed to report directly to the Ministry of Interior. Ebrah agreed to the meeting with ISF and requested a private meeting with CDR 214 FB and PRT prior to the arrival of MG Hanin and CPT Majid. End Background.

¶4. (S// REL TO USA, ACGU) In the first meeting with PRT and 214 FB, Ebrah claimed that the violence in al Kut in March was driven by criminal elements of Jaysh al Mahdi (JAM) from outside of Wasit, and not by locals directed from Najaf. Ebrah revisited themes he has discussed in prior meetings including: (1) his allegiance to Mohammed Sadiq al Sadr; (2) the Sadrists Trend's popularity with the populace; (3) his belief that the ST can "win on ideas;" (4) the importance of the USG publicizing its reconstruction work; and (5) his position that criminals causing problems under JAM's banner should be arrested. He closed the meeting by expressing his appreciation for the meeting the previous week with BG Cardon (Ref A) and for the time with COL Baker and the PRT, and reiterated that, as the situation improves, meetings with higher ranking ST members are possible.

¶15. (S//REL TO USA, ACGU) MG Hanin began the second meeting by asserting that his "biggest challenge" is the Iranian influence in Wasit Province, noting that JAM should be understood as having three elements: (1) "native" Iraqi groups; (2) Iraqis knowingly recruited and supported by Iran; and (3) Iraqis unwittingly recruited and run by Iranian agents. Hanin recommended the formation of a "Committee on the Investigation of Political Figures" as a mechanism to address the concerns of the PC members, while at the same time protecting KSWAT and KCID from accusations of operating outside the law. He said KCID would be the action arm of said committee. Hanin's suggestion that CF be represented on the committee was respectfully ruled out, as it would create the appearance of a conflict of interest.

¶16. (S//REL TO USA, ACGU) CPT Majid said a recent KCID raid on a house near the Office of the Martyr Sadr (OMS) al Kut headquarters resulted in the seizure of six RPG-7s, other weapons, ammunition, and ordnance. Ebrah acknowledged that there may have been "bad elements" associated with JAM that were involved with the cache but noted that he and other OMS officials had not been near the office for several weeks due to the recent IP raids. (Note: The OMS al Kut office has been raided three times since late March. IP contacts have claimed JAM members have trashed the offices after the raids in order to frame the IP units that were there, while OMS contacts claim that any trashing was the work of the IP units. End Note.) Although he was congenial and referred to Ebrah as "my brother" several times, CPT Majid ended the meeting by declaring that "I will not hesitate to arrest you if I have the support of a judge."

BAGHDAD 00001585 002 OF 002

¶17. (S//REL TO USA, ACGU) The meeting ended with agreement that an engagement would be set in the near future by CDR 214 FB with the same attendees plus members of the judiciary and PRT RoL adviser to address recent problems regarding arrest warrants.

¶18. (S//REL TO USA, ACGU) Comment: The fact that the meeting was held was in itself significant and has improved the PRT's leverage with Ebrah. Ebrah and Majid were friendly toward one other and both instead there was nothing personal between them. The PRT and 214 FB will work with MG Hanin, the PC, and Chief Judge to arrange a meeting to expedite the formation of the "Committee of the Investigation of Political Figures." End Comment.

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